

THE S.T.F.U. NEWS

Southern Tenant Farmers' Union

November, 1939

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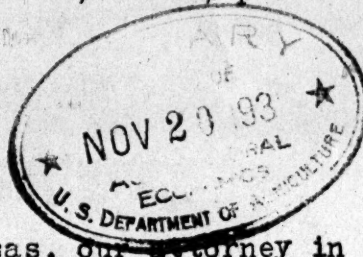
COTTON PICKING PRICE

282.8
508 ✓

The good weather this fall has been very favorable to the cotton grower in getting the crop picked. It has made it possible to hold the price for picking lower than if there had been danger of damage to the crop through rain. However, where the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union was strongly organized, the price for picking was held up around 75¢ to 90¢ and in some instances \$1.00 per 100 pounds as against 50¢ to 60¢ per 100 pounds in unorganized areas.

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LOUIS JOHNSON FREE



Mr. Claude Cooper, of Blytheville, Arkansas, our attorney in the Louis Johnson case, has just reported to us that Louis is now free. We have not been able to get the details of the proceedings at this writing.

Louis Johnson had been framed on an arson charge growing out of a cotton-picking strike early in the fall of 1938, and had been sentenced to ten years in the state penitentiary by a jury that was out less than three minutes. The conviction was obtained on an alleged confession which Johnson says was obtained by threats and intimidation.

The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, backed by the Workers' Defense League, had appealed this case to the Arkansas State Supreme Court and obtained a reversal. The case was remanded for new trial. The only possible way the Circuit Court could have convicted Johnson a second time would have been with perjured testimony. If it had been possible to find a bona fide witness to prove the State's case, it would have been done in the original trial.

Brother Johnson had been held in jail for more than a year because we had been unable to make bond in the amount required, \$3,000.

Such cases as this one and the three "Night Riding" cases now up for appeal to the United States Supreme Court are brought against members of the Union, not for the purpose of upholding law and order, but solely to embarrass the Union and hinder its effectiveness in the fight for improved conditions among the cotton workers of the South.

These cases cost the Union a lot of money that we need for organizational work. Some of our friends have very generously contributed to these legal expenses and have thus enabled us to get to this point with the cases, but we still need funds to carry on.

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SECRETARY GIVEN ABSENCE LEAVE

Our Secretary, H. L. Mitchell, was given a leave of absence for July and August to enable him to do some special work for the government. His services were so well liked that he was offered employment for the remainder of the year, so his leave was extended until our Convention next January.

In order to carry on the affairs of the Union effectively and efficiently in Brother Mitchell's absence, the National Executive Council, at its meeting on September 9th, appointed Blaine E. Treadway as Acting Secretary until the next Convention. Brother Treadway had been serving in the capacity of Educational Director.

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PEMISCOT COUNTY WORKING

The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union is at this time getting more solidly settled to a building and working program than ever before. Pemiscot County, Missouri, has recently organized a County Central Council. County President Bill Johnson and County Secretary Isaac L. Wells can be depended on to get things done.

Local 63, at Wardell, in Pemiscot County, reports that they have elected four members on the Agricultural Conservation Association Community Committee. The report seems to indicate that the County Agent refused to serve with Union men on the committees in that county, and so resigned.

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WOODRUFF COUNTY

Woodruff County, Arkansas, has had two interesting County Central Council meetings recently. Woodruff County Central Council is taking steps to see that every local in the county makes reports promptly and shows evidence of life and action. The new County Secretary, Mrs. Flotine Hodge, Rt. 1, McCrory, Arkansas, is due a lot of praise for the good work she is doing. We hope all the locals in the county will cooperate with her.

A great deal of credit is also due to F. R. Betton and D. A. Griffin for the renewed Union interest in Woodruff.

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ST FRANCIS COUNTY

St. Francis County, Arkansas, is not lagging in Union work either. J. F. Hynds, as President, and M. J. Jones, as Secretary, of the St. Francis County Central Council are making things hum. Their last County Central Council meeting was well attended.

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COUNTIES THAT HAVE NOT FORMED
CENTRAL COUNCIL BODIES OF THEIR
OWN SHOULD DO SO AS FAST AS THEY
CAN QUALIFY. THE NATIONAL OFFICE
WILL BE GLAD TO GIVE WHATEVER HELP
IS NECESSARY IN THE FORMATION OF
SUCH BODIES.

MISSISSIPPI PRESSING FORWARD

The State of Mississippi is on the up and up in the work of the S.T.F.U. The organizers there are giving good accounts of themselves, not by words, but by the applications for charter that reach the National Office from day to day.

Mississippi is stepping up in the matter of dues payments, too. Look out, Missouri! Look out, Arkansas! Look out Tennessee, Oklahoma and all the other Southern states! Mississippi is challenging you. What is your answer?

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NATIONAL SHARECROPPERS WEEK

National Sharecroppers' Week is being planned now, to begin Monday, March 4th, and end the following Sunday. New York, Boston, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Newark, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Rochester, Detroit, Louisville, Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, Wis., Minneapolis and St. Paul are to be visited by speakers from the S.T.F.U., who will carry the message of the oppressed and exploited Southern cotton workers--the tenants, sharecroppers and day laborers who grow the cotton that clothes the world, but who themselves go poorly clothed because they cannot buy back the product of their toil with the wages they receive.

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NEWS FLASH

Louis Johnson is here at the National office now and asks us to give you the following letter:-

Memphis, Tenn.
October 30, 1939

Dear Brothers:

I been in jail at Osceola, Ark. one year and 25 days and I was released October 23. I am so glad I don't know what to do. Although I hadn't committed the crime they had me charged with, I had to stay in jail just the same. The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union stuck by me. If it hadn't been for it I don't know what I would have done. I advise everybody to join the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union (and get protection for your due right). It is built upon the foundation of Justice. I have been a member of it for two years and better and I have found no flaw in it. I had a ten year sentence for a crime I did not commit, and the S.T.F.U. fought my case.

Fraternally.

(Signed) Louis Johnson

ORDER UNION LITERATURE

There are now some very good educational bulletins available which you should order from the National Office. The following sell for 10¢ each:- "Government Programs", "History of the S.T.F.U.", "Organization and Objectives of the S.T.F.U.", "Land & Liberty for Mexican Farmers!"